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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

A. Sorge-Seitendorf area

1. The two sections in Sorge and Katzendorf were consolidated in late 1953 and redesignated Sorge-Sued and Sorge-Nord. The entrance to the combined areas was through a new gate at Truenzig. Relatively few workers remained in Sorge-Sued; the work was concentrated near the water tower and the Duschkombinat (sic) and was expected to be completed by mid-December 1953. Although geologists had reported an ore field some six meters below the one that had been exploited, the possibility of flooding as a result of poor water drainage had delayed further operations in the area. At Sorge-Nord there were approximately 5,000 workers, exclusive of maintenance crews. The main entrance to the entire area was guarded by KVP personnel from Gera. An administration building near the main entrance, a machine shop, and a transformer station were under construction.

2. Grade II ore was deposited on dumps in both Sorge-Sued and Sorge-Nord. Grade III ore was loaded on open railroad cars for shipment, generally to Crossen; if Crossen could not handle the ore, it was shipped to other plants. Shortly before 20 November 1953, Crossen suspended work for three or four days, for unknown reasons; as a result, the Zwickau marshalling yards were overloaded.

3. An average of 35 carloads of ore was shipped daily from Teichwolframsdorf(Teichdorf). The ore was transported to the ramp by tippers and dumped into open railroad cars. Most of the ore was loaded at the new loading plant between Katzendorf and Truenzig; this plant was in full operation. The two ore bunkers of the plant worked smoothly. Three narrow-gauge tracks linked

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the mining area with the loading plant. The quality of the ore in the tippers was tested in a tunnel in the mining area. The tippers were then drawn by Diesel locomotives directly to the bunkers for unloading. Preliminary work on the electrification of the narrow-gauge line has been completed; only the overhead wires have yet to be installed. The plant received approximately 160 carloads of ore daily. After the ore had been transferred from the ore bunkers to open railroad cars, the cars were marshalled into trains of about 30 cars each which were drawn to Teichwolframsdorf by a freight locomotive. The loading plants were guarded by Soviet military personnel. The ramps at Teichwolframsdorf and Seelingstaedt were about 120 meters long and 6 meters wide; seven freight cars could be loaded simultaneously.

B. Katzendorf area

The mining area at Katzendorf was surrounded by a barbed wire fence and guarded by Soviet personnel. Open cast and ore mining continued in full operation. A large number of excavators and shovel dredges were in operation. One new dredge had been supplied by VEB Maschinenbau Nordhausen. The dredges broke down fairly frequently: as a result, only a few were in operation at any given time. Grade II ore was deposited on a dump pile, but grade III ore was shipped to Seelingstaedt and Berga in tippers. Approximately 25 flatcars of ore per day were shipped from Seeligenstaedt, where the tippers ascended a lateral ramp approximately 70 meters long and 7 meters wide, dumped the ore onto the ramp, and then went down the slope at the opposite end. The ore was shoveled into the railroad cars from the ramp which was level with the loading surface.

C. Ronneburg area

1. On 15 November 1953 there was a cave-in on the 60 meter level of the working drift in the Lichtenberg central shaft; the collapse occurred because of poor construction combined with the heavy weight of the relatively soft grade II ore. This shaft was exploited on three levels. The repairs of the damaged drift area delayed mining operations for about two weeks. There were no changes in the labor force.

2. The central shaft, which previously had two districts, had been divided into three districts as follows:

   a. The first district included the outcropping and the 30 meter level. The outcropping was 15 meters deep, almost circular in shape, and contained grade II ore at a depth of about one foot. Hauling was carried on on a makeshift basis. Scaling hammers were used and trolleys were raised by whims and loaded from a conveyer belt. Surface mining took place on the 30 meter level where the best mining conditions were found. Grades II and III ore were usually mined in this district; grade IV was rarely found. No slack was hauled.

   b. District No. 2 included the 90, 120, and 180 meter levels. Exploration of the 90 meter level was still in progress; this area was being prepared for exploitation. Underground galleries, projections, and tracks were under construction. Mining operations were expected to begin in January 1954. No work was being done on the 120 meter level, but it was to be resumed in December 1953. Explorations of the 180 meter level were discontinued, although numerous drillings were carried out by the drilling section of Object No. 90 on the western drift of the section. Six underground galleries, including one connecting shaft, were under construction on the eastern drift, where level No. 4 was to be sunk. Geologists reported that a sufficient amount of ore had been found on level No. 3 and predicted that ore would also be found at greater depths. Consequently, three

levels were to be sunk; the deepest level was to be about 300 meters below the ground surface.

c. District No. 3 included the 60 meter level which was being fully exploited. The mining operations were carried out in a gallery about 1,000 meters long, on several superimposed floors. Grades II, III, and IV ore were mined, with the percentage of grade IV relatively high because much slate coal looked like hard coal.

3. On 12 November 1953, there was a sulphur fire on the 30 meter level of the Schmirchau central shaft where pyrites were stored. The approaches to the level were sealed and three holes drilled from the surface to the level. One hole acted as a vent for escaping smoke and gas and the other two were used to introduce viscous mud into the level. Clearing work was not possible until after 23 November 1953; consequently, the major ore concentration of this central shaft was not worked for about two weeks. The only mining was done on the 60 meter level where grades II, III and IV were removed. Mining operations were begun on the 90 meter level although preparatory work had not been completed. Underground galleries and projections were under construction on the 120 meter level.

D. Ore mining and loading

1. Uranium ore of every type was stored on piles at the two central shafts, so that it was possible to make regular shipments of ore despite the fact that ore was mined at an uneven rate. Grades II, III and IV ore were dumped on these piles. The pile of grade II ore at Schmirchau had been almost entirely cleared by a shovel dredge. Grade IV ore was not shipped during October and November 1953. Grade I ore had not been found again, and geologists stated that what had previously been reported to be grade I ore was actually grade II. They also said that there was little likelihood of discovering grade I ore in the Lichtenberg and Schmirchau districts. Consequently, the sheet metal boxes, (25 x 55 x 30 cm interior dimensions) which had been provided for the shipping of grade I ore, were gradually being used as toolboxes. No new boxes were delivered.

2. Ore from Lichtenberg and Schmirchau was dispatched at the Ronneburg freight station, south of Ronneburg. The old loading ramp there was about 25 meters long and 7 meters wide. Three or four trains, of about 30 cars each, left Ronneburg every day. In late November 1953, a second ore-loading installation was built. Daily shipments from Lichtenberg and Schmirchau averaged 50 to 60 carloads, half of which were filled with grade II ore. Tippers were used to carry ore to the loading plant.

3. An ore testing device was operated by a Russian at the Ronneburg railroad station and was guarded by a Russian sentry. A new ore testing device for tippers was nearly completed near Lichtenberg. The mine cars were also checked before they left the shaft. The accuracy of the ore testing devices was checked daily on standard mine cars with an established content of ore.

E. Miscellaneous information

1. The Gauern shaft district, operated by Object No. 29, was neither fenced in nor guarded, although seven farms of the adjacent village had been previously evacuated. Three excavators and a large number of tippers were operating in this area. Ore output was poor, although it was allegedly only about 50 cm below the surface. About 3 to 5 tons of ore from Gauern were shipped daily to Seelingstaedt . There were no shipments to Berga or Neumuehle during October and November 1953. Fifty carloads of grade III ore were said to be shipped to Ronneburg daily.

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2. In the Paitzdorf district 18 derricks were recently erected and a new shaft dug. One lignite layer, about 12 meters thick, was discovered during the boring operations, but exploitation of this deposit was forbidden.

3. The new experimental shaft in the wooded district south of Teichwolframsdorf was again shut down.

4. Several deep experimental shafts were in operation near Ronneburg, near the Autobahn between Ronneburg and Meerane. The shafts were equipped with winding engines. Rich ore deposits were allegedly discovered in this area.

5. Plans were under way for a new central shaft near Schmirchau. The boring crew of Object No. 29 was to construct the shaft with building materials, including wood, from Lichtenberg.

6. Object No. 30, Saalfeld, was combined with Object No. 90. On 21 November 1953, the merger was celebrated at Gera.

7. Plans were allegedly under consideration for the construction of a new dressing plant, because the plant at Crossen was not able to handle the volume of ore. The problem was considered urgent in view of a further increase in ore output in the near future. A site on the Weisse Elster River, near Berga, was being considered for the new plant.

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